**Opposition Analysis: Love and Hate**

Love and hate is a common theme in Shakespearean plays. This duality is developed in Romeo and Juliet, as Romeo’s and Juliet’s passionate love conflicts and contrasts with the hate between their families. This enmity is reflected in every member of the two households, even down to the servants. Throughout the play, the Montagues and Capulets are constantly at odds, reminding Romeo and Juliet that this hate is an obstacle to their love. However, Act 3 Scene 1, Act 3 Scene 2, and Act 5 Scene 3 are prime examples of how, despite the hate that permeates every corner of their lives, Romeo and Juliet’s love proves to be the more powerful emotion.

In Act 3 Scene 1, Romeo’s love for Juliet allows him to overlook the feud between the families and extend his love even to Juliet’s cousin, Tybalt. In Act 1, Romeo terms Juliet one of his “foe[s]” (1.5.132). However, he marries Juliet in Act 2, and is confronted by Tybalt in Act 3 Scene 1, who seeks to duel Romeo, calling him a “villain” (3.1.62). However, Romeo confesses to Tybalt that he “love[s] thee better than thou canst devise” and “tender[s]” the name of Capulet, regardless of the fact that he seeks to battle him to the death, and that their families are enemies (3.1.70-72). In this scene, love triumphs both figuratively and literally over hate, as Romeo slays Tybalt and Tybalt’s hate for Romeo loses to Romeo’s love for his friend Mercutio. In Act 3 Scene 1, the love Romeo bears for Juliet and his friend Mercutio gives him the strength to first overcome the hate between Montagues and Capulets and refrain from fighting Tybalt, before killing Tybalt for revenge and prevailing over Tybalt’s hatred.

Act 3 Scene 2 presents another situation in which love is stronger than hate. When Juliet learns that Romeo killed Tybalt, she is first appalled by Romeo’s actions, hating him for murdering her cousin. She is convinced that he is a “villain” (3.2.110). However, in the end, Juliet’s love overpowers her hate and her loyalties lie with her beloved Romeo rather than with her family, as she deems Tybalt her “villain cousin” (3.2.111). Her love for Romeo causes her to overlook this new development in the family feud that should have only increased her hate for the Montagues. The love that Juliet shares with Romeo conquers the hatred prevalent in the two families once again, as Juliet chooses Romeo over Tybalt and the feud.

The final scene, Act 5 Scene 3, is the most obvious example of love defeating hate. Moved by the love between their children, the Montagues and Capulets put aside their “ancient grudge” (Pro.3). Just as the Friar hopes, Romeo and Juliet’s love turned “your households’ rancor into pure love” (2.3.99). Love is victorious in this final scene of the play, as although Romeo and Juliet are essentially killed by the hate between the two families, their love and sacrifice ultimately transforms the animosity between the Capulets and Montagues into mutual respect.

The opposition of love and hate is key to understanding Romeo and Juliet. The power of love is repeatedly proven throughout the play. The love between Romeo and Juliet remains steadfast in the face of such trials as the hate between their families and resolves this hate in the end, giving substance to the age-old adage that love conquers all.

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